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AMERICAN SAMOA

Preliminary results of a joint survey by American Samoa health officials on the prevalence of leptospirosis (a bacterial disease) shows a 15% exposure rate. The main source of the bacteria is pigs. The normal exposure rate for areas where leptospirosis occurs is 10%. People with piggeries must be willing to make changes in order to combat the spread of the water borne bacterial disease. The EPA and Public Health can only advise piggery owners but it is their responsibility to implement the recommendations. Leptospirosis is commonly caused by animal urine or fecal matter in drinking water. Symptoms include high fever, severe headache, chills, muscle aches, and vomiting, and may include jaundice, red eyes, abdominal pain, diarrhea, or a rash. If left untreated, the patient could develop kidney damage, meningitis, liver failure, and respiratory distress. In rare cases death occurs.

- *Radio New Zealand International*, Aug 19, 2004, <http://www.rnzi.com/>
- *Pacific Islands Report*, Aug 19, 2004, <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2004/August/08-19-12.htm>

Pneumonia continues to be prevalent in flood shelters with 837 more children contracting the infection on 17 August. Pneumonia has infected 13,413 people, (mostly newborns) with 55 deaths from 4-16 August 2004. The diarrhea outbreak continues in the flood affected areas. Two more patients died of the disease while 5,926 more people were affected, bringing the number to 176,041 since 12 July. Hepatitis affected 587 people. Another 2763 dysentery patients reported to various medical camps 17 August. A total of 31,830 people were sickened by the disease, which infects the intestine. Skin and eye diseases also increased with 26,494 patients reporting to medical camps. Another 44 people contracted dengue in the capital. A total of 2,097 people have been treated for dengue, which killed 5 people since June.

- News From Bangladesh, Aug 18, 2004, <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-08-18&hidType=NAT&hidRecord=000000000000000018417>
- WHO Flood Situation Report, Aug 17, 2004, http://w3.whosea.org/LinkFiles/Update_on_Floods_ban-17aug04.pdf

· News From Bangladesh, Aug 17, 2004, <http://www.bangladesh-web.com/view.php?hidDate=2004-08-17&hidType=NAT&hidRecord=000000000000000018104>

HONG KONG

Imported Dengue Fever in Hong Kong

Three more imported dengue fever cases have been confirmed by the Hong Kong Department of Health on 10 Aug 2004. The cases were 3 women, aged 33 to 35, who developed fever, muscle, and joint pain on 27 July, 28 July, and 2 August 2004. Two of the women have recovered, while the third is in Queen Elizabeth Hospital in stable condition. They had all traveled to Southeast Asian countries throughout the incubation period and had recently returned to Hong Kong. All 20 Dengue cases reported in Hong Kong in 2004 were imported.

Source:

· Xinhua, Aug 10, 2004, http://www.asean-disease-surveillance.net/ASNNews_Detail.asp?ID=1831

· Promed Mail, Aug 15, 2004,

http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:15373406305550504650::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1010,26396

INDIA

Malaria Epidemic in Western Indian Village

Health officials are trying to prevent the spread of a malaria epidemic in Surashamal village of Kheda district in Gujarat (in western India) where 24 people have died during the past two weeks. Eleven of the deaths are due to malaria while the remaining are believed to be other illness. The disease spread is due to heavy waterlogging after recent rains and many areas have become breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Anti-malarial spraying is now being conducted in and around the village and teams are finding and emptying objects that have collected water.

Source:

· The Hindu, Aug 19, 2004, <http://www.hindu.com/2004/08/19/stories/2004081912490300.htm>

HIV Infections Rising in India

The number of Indians with HIV infection could rise to 5.5 million per year by 2033 unless immediate measures are taken in treatment policy and prevention. HIV/AIDS can become the largest cause of death in India, accounting for 17% of all deaths and 40 % of infectious deaths by 2033, according to a World Bank report on HIV/AIDS in India. HIV/AIDS currently accounts for 2% of all deaths and 6% of infectious deaths. India has the largest number of people with HIV/AIDS outside South Africa. Knowledge about the illness is scant, and most Indians who are infected are not aware. The number of people living with HIV/AIDS in India rose to 5.1 million in 2003. HIV/AIDS has spread beyond traditionally high-risk groups such as prostitutes, drug users and homosexuals and has also spread to the countryside, with rural India accounting for a 59% of infections compared with 41% in the cities.

Source:

· Reuters, Aug 13, 2004,

<http://reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml;jsessionid=E4DPGNHFMQDVICRBAE0CFFA?type=healthNews&storyID=5971762§ion=news>

· The Detroit News/Health, Aug 12, 2004, <http://www.detnews.com/2004/health/0408/16/a16-240126.htm>

INDONESIA

Illegal Beef Imports May Put Indonesian Population at Risk for Foot and Mouth Disease, BSE

The Indonesian Consumers Foundation (YLKI) has warned the public since May 2004 that illegally imported meat products are putting Indonesia at risk for foot and mouth disease (FMD) and for mad cow disease. YLKI surveys, in traditional markets, documented the widespread selling of illegally imported meat products and suspects that meats are being imported illegally from India, Brazil, Argentina, and the United States (disregarding bans on the importation of meat products from these countries imposed because of FMD and BSE disease issues). YLKI is urging the Ministry of Agriculture to cooperate with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and with the customs and excise office, to curb all meat smuggling. The volume of illegally imported meat products has increased to alarming levels. Smuggled meat is thought to have caused health problems before, such as the 2001 FMD epidemic in the UK.

Source:

- Antara News, Jakarta Post, May 26, 2004, <http://none>
- Promed Mail, Aug 19, 2004, http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:3670782754706406511::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,26425

MALAYSIA

Malaysia Confirms Outbreak of Deadly Strain of Avian Influenza Virus

Malaysian agricultural officials have confirmed that a highly pathogenic strain of avian influenza virus has infected poultry in the country. This disease was never reported before in Peninsular Malaysia. The announcement on 19 August came 24 hours after bird flu was found in chickens in a northern Malaysian village. Tests showed the flu strain to be H5N1, which killed 27 people in Thailand and Vietnam earlier in 2004. This outbreak may have serious consequences for the local poultry industry, the export industry, and public health. Officials have ordered the slaughter of all poultry in the village to halt the spread of the disease. As of 19 August, the country is on a "nationwide alert." Malaysia will increase security along the Thai border to prevent poultry smuggling. Officials believe the outbreak was caused by a cross-border infection, but could not confirm whether it came from smuggling or the movement of migratory birds.

Source:

- Voice of America, Aug 19, 2004, <http://www.voanews.com/article.cfm?objectID=EB19C301-A163-4E1F-AC3D7F198EE39388>
- Xinhuanet, Aug 19, 2004, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2004-08/19/content_1828020.htm
- Promed Mail, Aug 19, 2004, http://www.promedmail.org/pls/askus/f?p=2400:1001:6656358388737541870::NO::F2400_P1001_BACK_PAGE,F2400_P1001_PUB_MAIL_ID:1000,26428
- ABC News, Aug 19, 2004, http://abcnews.go.com/wire/Living/ap20040819_727.html

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

AIDS Rapidly Increasing in Papua New Guinea

PNG may soon realize an AIDS crisis of southern African proportions. The government, experiencing corruption and mismanagement, has been slow to respond. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least one in 100 Papua New Guineans are infected with HIV. Out of a population of 5.2 million, approximately 150 people are infected each month -- an increase of 20 percent per year. The number of infections could reach one million in 10 to 15 years unless action is taken immediately. HIV/AIDS in PNG is spread mainly through heterosexual contact within an atmosphere of promiscuity, a high incidence of rape and increasing prostitution in the major towns and cities. The government recently established two parliamentary committees on the AIDS issue and a plan by the Global Fund against AIDS to provide 30 million US dollars over five years for treatment and prevention beginning next year.

Source:

· *Hindustantimes.com*, Aug 17, 2004, http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/181_952797.0050.htm

VIETNAM

Three People Die in Current Avian Influenza Outbreak in Viet Nam

In the present outbreak in Viet Nam three fatal human cases of avian influenza have now been laboratory confirmed, two in the north and one in the south. For two of these cases, further testing has identified the H5N1 strain as the causative agent. The most recent case died on 6 August and no new cases have been identified since then. With support from the Ministry of Health in Viet Nam, arrangements are under way to send specimens from these cases to a laboratory in the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network. The laboratory will perform gene sequencing and other analyses of the virus in order to yield information immediately relevant to assessment of the public health risk. Studies will determine whether the virus responsible for these cases has mutated.

Source:

· *World Health Organization (WHO)*, *CSR, Disease Outbreak News*, Aug 18, 2004, http://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_08_18/en/
· *MSNBC News*, Aug 16, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5722897/>

Other World News

WORLD

Vaccines Against Two Strains of Avian Influenza to be Developed and Tested Soon

The National Institutes of Health awarded Chiron Corporation a \$1.194 million contract to develop up to 40,000 doses of vaccine against H9N2 avian influenza, a type of avian influenza that is less lethal but more widespread than the strain that killed 27 this year in Asia. The August issue of the *Journal of Virology* suggested the H9N2 strain has become stronger in recent years. The increased virulence, its prevalence among birds and the ability of the H9N2 virus to infect humans raises fears it could initiate a pandemic. The H9N2 bird flu affected three people in Hong Kong in 1999 and 2003. In May, Chiron received an NIAID contract to produce 8,000 doses of vaccine for H5N1, a

more lethal strain that has resurfaced in Asia. Chiron will manufacture the H9N2 vaccine using an inactivated strain of the virus provided by the Centers for Disease Control. NIAID is scheduled to conduct clinical trials using both versions of the vaccine as early as 2005.

Source:

· CBS News, Aug 17, 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/08/17/health/main636567.shtml>

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